

# RCMB IV-A DRENCHES STRIKE THREAT AT COCA-COLA FEMSA PHILS., INC.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

National Conciliation and Mediation Board

Regional Branch No. 4-A

21 November 2016

Calamba City – The Regional Conciliation and Mediation Branch here has drenched a possible strike at the fastest running Coca-Cola Plant and settled two Notices of Strike involving dissent over hospitalization and medical benefits.

Conciliator-Mediators Cynthia C. Foncardas and Jovit R. Morando succeeded in forging an amicable settlement between Coca-Cola Femsas Philippines, Inc., and two of its registered unions, namely, Coca-Cola Monthlies Union and Canlubang Plant Coca-Cola Employees Union (Dailies).

Both unions rant over the implementation of hospital and medical benefits which they say was a violation of their Collective Bargaining Agreement and against the Plant-Level Agreement with the Coca-Cola Employees Union.

According to Mr. Brendo Enriquez, Canlubang Plant Coca-Cola Employees Union President, the medical and hospital benefits shall be granted to all union members regardless of the date they were hired, as long as they are covered in the bargaining unit.

However, the management, was firm on its position that the implementation of such benefits was correct and relevant to the above-cited agreements.

The management also mentioned that the said dispute should be submitted to Voluntary Arbitration because the issue encompasses interpretation of the CBA.

These manifestations brought seethe among the union members which forced them to conduct a strike-vote balloting on November 3, 2016.

Despite threats of possible strike, the team of RCMB IV-A conciliators, never gave up and pursued in bridging the difference until parties reached a favorable agreement.

After seven conferences, the parties amicably settled their dispute, where the management agreed to honor the Plant-Level Agreement and manifested that the union can avail the Maximum Benefit Limit and can also reimburse hospital expenses exceeding Php 90,000, provided that the employee has available Sick Leave balance.

Both parties were very appreciative of the efforts of NCMB in speedily settling the case, saying, "The Canlubang Plant is the fastest running Coca-Cola Plant worldwide, we cannot afford to waste another day and let the employees work under clouded minds over a simple dispute. We opt to preserve cordial relations and relieve fears or threat of reprisal."

The settlement of the two Notices of Strike is a manifestation of the effectiveness of team conciliation practiced by NCMB. The team of conciliators who handled this case was headed by Director Feliciano R. Orihuela, Jr. and Deputy Executive Director Maria Teresita L. Cancio.

End// Joan Esther O. Mabilangan